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Ex-CIA clerk and Ghanaian are indicted

By Pam McClintock
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A federal grand jury in Alexandria yesterday indicted a former CIA clerk and a Ghanaian national on charges of espionage by allegedly transmitting classified information to the government of Ghana.

In separate indictments, Sharon Scranage, 29, and Michael Agbotui Soussoudis, 39, were charged with one count of conspiracy to commit espionage. Assistant U.S. Attorney Justin Williams, who is prosecuting the case in U.S. District Court, said the charge is one of the most serious espionage violations on federal law books.

Ms. Scranage and Mr. Soussoudis are to be arraigned on the indictments Monday, Mr. Williams said.

Described by FBI officials as former lovers, the two also were indicted on several other charges, including three counts of committing actual acts of espionage. If convicted, they could face the

maximum penalty of life imprisonment for each of the four espionage charges.

Ms. Scranage, of King George, Va., is accused of passing information regarding CIA activities in Ghana to Mr. Soussoudis while she worked at the CIA station in Accra, Ghana, from December 1983 to May 1985, according to the 35-page indictment against her.

Ms. Scranage, the fourth CIA employee implicated in a case of espionage against the United States, returned to the United States in May to work at CIA headquarters in McLean.

Prosecutors said Mr. Soussoudis, a relative of Ghanaian leader Flight Lt. Jerry Rawlings, works for the West African country's intelligence services.

Mr. Soussoudis has been in custody since he was arrested by FBI officials July 10 at a Holiday Inn in Springfield, where he believed Ms. Scranage was waiting for him. Ms. Scranage was freed on a \$25,000 bond after her arrest July 11.

The separate attorneys retained by Mr. Soussoudis and Ms. Scranage could not

be reached for comment yesterday.

According to the indictments, the information Ms. Scranage handed over to Mr. Soussoudis included:

- A list of military equipment Ghana had requested from Libya that she copied from a CIA intelligence report.
- Details of a planned coup by Ghanaian dissidents.
- The names of CIA agents working in Ghana.

During a court hearing last month, Thomas Dyson, an attorney for Mr. Soussoudis, said his client was attempting to get back information the CIA "had stolen from his country."

Mr. Dyson said Mr. Soussoudis was only trying to learn what the CIA had been told by Ghanaian dissidents and that he had no interest in any military information that had to do with the United States.

But U.S. intelligence officials said that in passing the names of CIA informants to the government of Ghana, Mr. Soussoudis endangered the lives of those people and injured the interests of the United States.

Before returning to the United States in May, Ms. Scranage met with Mr. Soussoudis and a high-ranking Ghanaian intelligence official who instructed her to obtain information on Ghanaian dissidents from files stored in CIA headquarters, prosecutors said.

FBI officials said the CIA had warned Ms. Scranage to end her relationship with Mr. Soussoudis while she was still in Ghana, but that she continued to pass him information.

Ms. Scranage, if convicted, also could face an additional sentence of 100 years in prison for violating the Agent Identity Protection Act by releasing the names of CIA agents working in Ghana, according to the indictment.

Ms. Scranage and Mr. Soussoudis also were indicted on several counts of illegally transmitting or receiving classified information.